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Miss. Baptists aiding in Isidore response

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

"Brother Isidore didn't bother us too much," said a convenience store employee in Bay St. Louis, "but it could've been worse. I've seen worse."

The clerk may have been correct in his assessment, but several coastal areas did take a significant hit including Mississippi Baptist's own Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. Tropical Storm Isidore passed through the Mississippi Gulf Coast September 26, bringing a surprisingly large tidal surge and massive rainfall.

"This was the first time in my 25 years that we've had a flood problem," said Gulfshore Assembly Manager Frank Simmons.

During the storm surge, which official estimates placed at 8.2 feet, between 12-18 inches of seawater soaked the lower floors of the facility.

Sharon Gibson, one of the ministry assistants at Gulfshore, said, "I've seen a lot of storms since 1978. I was here during Hurricanes Elena and Georges. Elena damaged the auditorium, tearing part of the roof off and blowing out some glass. This is the first time we've had this kind of water damage."

"Usually, we can expect a storm surge of four to five feet during a Category 1 hurricane," said Simmons, "but this time the surge was almost twice that. The highest wind gusts we had were about 62 miles per hour, so it was a relatively small storm."

"Our buildings are designed to withstand a tidal surge," Simmons continued. "The way the building pilings are anchored, we should be able to take a hit from a major hurricane. While there would be significant damage, the basic structure of the buildings should stay intact."

While the lower floors of Gulfshore were flooded, there was no damage to the upper floors, including the residence areas.

"FEMA redid many of the insurance requirements after Caroline struck," said Simmons. "Because our housing areas are a minimum of thirteen-and-a-half feet above average high tide, we are able to take advantage of several insurance qualifications, which makes repair easier."

Soon after Isidore passed through the area, Mississippi Baptist disaster relief teams sprang into action. One group arrived in Biloxi the evening of September 26, and set up the feeding unit to begin preparing meals the next day. Another group of

about 30 volunteers began the job of "mud out," cleaning mud and debris from the Gulfshore Assembly buildings.

The mud-out volunteers used pressure washers, wet/dry vacuums, squeegees, rollers, and other tools to accomplish their messy job.

Concrete block walls and floors were pressure washed, debris was picked up and placed in trash containers, and vacuums sucked up excess water. The mudout crews are trained to clean up flooded areas to allow for proper drying, then the areas are sanitized to help alleviate the possibility of germs and bacteria flourishing.

While many other docks and piers in the coastal area were damaged or destroyed, the new pier at Gulfshore Assembly had minimal damage. "The crosses are still standing on the beach, too," said Simmons, referring to the three crosses adjacent to the pier.

The feeding unit set up in the parking lot of First Church, Biloxi. According to Jim Didlake, director of the Men's Ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the crew is preparing about 1,000 meals per day. The

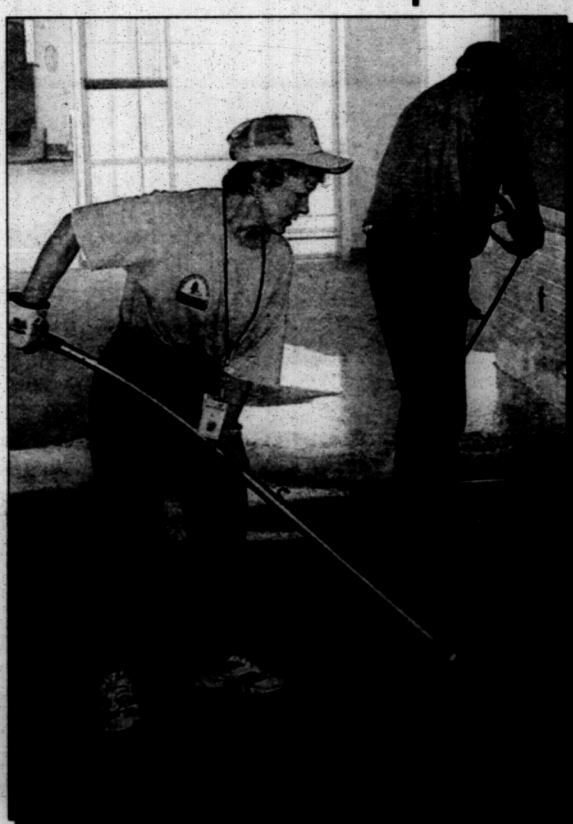


ART OF "MUDOUT" — Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers use various techniques, including high power pressure washers and wet/dry vacuums, to clean out the mud and water left at Gulfshore Assembly in the aftermath of tropical storm Isidore September 26. (BR photo by Tony Martin).

American Red Cross is distributing the food prepared by Mississippi Baptist volunteers to people displaced by floodwaters. Didlake noted that there was a possibility that disaster relief volunteers might help with mudout in some local homes. Approximately 50 volunteers have been activated so far.

"We shouldn't have any problem with taking groups anytime," Simmons said. "Right now, the lobby and registration area isn't ready, so we'll have to work around groups needing those areas. Otherwise, we're fine. The auditorium doesn't have any damage and is available for use."

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit is funded by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE — Jane Newell (left), associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation in Jackson and a disaster relief volunteer, uses a heavy roller to force water out of the carpet at Gulfshore Assembly on September 26. (BR photo by Tony Martin)



MINIMAL PIER DAMAGE — While many piers and docks along the Mississippi Gulf coast sustained significant damage from Tropical Storm Isidore, the pier at Gulfshore Assembly rode out the storm with very little structural damage. "The crosses are still standing on the beach, too," said Simmons. (BR photo by Tony Martin).

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

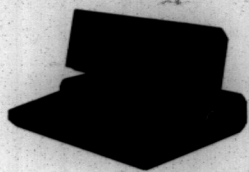
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Target: hometown newspapers

Like thousands of issues before, an early September issue of the New York Times carried a page or so of wedding announcements in the society section. Sure, wedding announcements are not that unusual in American newspapers, but this announcement was an eye-catcher.

Running alongside the announcement was a photograph of the proud young couple, broad smiles radiating from the newsprint. They were both men.

Thus the Times joined 137 other newspapers that the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) organization claims have agreed to become part of their "Announcing Equality Project," whereby announcements of heterosexual weddings and homosexual unions are printed with equal respect and prominence.

"We hope this prompts more couples in New York and across the country to submit their wedding announcements and put a face on our lives and our relationships," said Steven Goldstein in a GLAAD press release. Goldstein recently went to Vermont with his partner Daniel Gross, where they were joined in a legal civil union in that state.

The GLAAD Announcing Equality Program is a national effort whereby the organization teams with local homosexual rights groups to pressure newspapers into publishing homosexual union announcements in the regular wedding announcements section.

As with the treatment of the Boy Scouts of America and other groups, homosexual advocates understand that society's institutions must be overtaken if homosexuality is to be fully mainstreamed. A prime time television show here, a newspaper there, and pretty soon they're well on the way to accomplishing their goal.

So far, they have met with great success in their newspaper campaign. Among the newspapers caving in to the pressure are a few predictable ones in liberal bastions of the country — and more than a few surprising entries from what is considered to be the Bible Belt.

The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer capitulated after only a few weeks of the GLAAD campaign, announcing that the newspaper would designate a special place for the homosexual union announcements separate from the wedding announcements. GLAAD promptly notified the newspaper that their organization wanted a meeting to demand that the unions be announced in the same space and manner as weddings.

Other Bible Belt newspapers listed as participating in the GLAAD Announcing Equality Project include the Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution-Journal, St. Louis (Mo.) Post-Dispatch, Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer, Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer, Winston-Salem (N.C.) Journal, Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune, and Montgomery (Al.) Advertiser.

Cooperating newspapers in Florida and Texas on the GLAAD list are too numerous to mention. No Mississippi newspaper is on the list, but the campaign will surely move into this state as the dominoes fall all around us.

What are Christians to do about this glorification of outright sin, when it comes to our hometown newspapers? After all, we haven't been very successful in fighting the television and cable networks that spew filth into our homes every evening. Feature movies are as vile as ever, despite our vocal protests.

There is one big difference. While national entertainment moguls sit in mirrored, high-rise buildings in New York City and Los Angeles, a hometown newspaper's publisher sits in the newspaper's hometown.

Even if the local newspaper is owned by a large, out-of-town corporation, it's a safe

"THE BEAUTY OF IT IS THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE NO ANGEL ON EARTH, YOU WERE WELCOMED HERE! IT'S ALL ABOUT GRACE!"



assumption that the publisher frequently (and often nervously) assesses the attitude of the community toward his newspaper.

If the community isn't happy, they don't buy newspapers. If the community doesn't buy newspapers, advertisers don't place ads. If advertisers stop purchasing all that expensive space... well, you get the picture.

One of the last things the publisher wants is for there to be a broad-based uproar about the content of his newspaper. An infrequent complaint is apt to draw a yawn; thousands of subscription cancellations will get his attention, however.

We'd best remember the hard lesson of legalizing liquor and gambling — once sin gets in the door, it's near impossible to ever get it out of the house again.

This is one of the battles that is worth the fight. Will you be ready?

GUEST OPINION:



Celebrate clergy's contributions

By Matt Buckles, director
Pastor/Leadership Development
Miss. Baptist Convention Board

October is Clergy Recognition Month, the customary time to recognize clergy for their work.

Specifically, October 20 is Bivocational Minister Appreciation Sunday. Regardless of the ministry method of your pastor and staff, a local church should recognize and show appreciation. Deacons, personnel committees and other key leaders must lead the church to recognize and show appreciation:

- **Pray something.** The most needed and wanted support for a minister is prayer. Public prayer and private gatherings ask God's blessings on those who serve in His Kingdom. One may want to consult the following web site for prayer materials for ministers: <http://www.praymag.com>

- **Say something.** Appropriate gestures and gifts can be given on birthdays, call/employment anniversaries, significant accomplishments or milestones, general recognition times or local church traditions.

- **Pay something.** Financial gifts are one form of tangible recognition. Others would be

paid vacations, sabbaticals/study time, extra days around convention or conferences, new clothes, furnishings, hobby gear and gadgets, etc. Also, churches can be responsible for honoraria and arrangements for guest speakers while the pastor and staff are away.

- **Plan something.** Plan secretly some event such as a church-wide meal, Sunday or Wednesday evening reception, Dutch treat at a local restaurant, and grocery/garden pounding. Invite their family and friends to be present. Arrange for the local Associational Missions Director or a state convention leader to be present for this special event.

- **Ensure a right attitude.** One observant church leader said in a personal committee meeting, "Just because my employer takes me for granted is no excuse for our church to do the same for our pastor and staff." That's not just an observant leader, but an obedient follower of Christ. The Bible calls us to recognize and support those who have charge of us. (1 Tim. 5:17, Philippians 2:29, Hebrews 13:16-17.)

Mark Twain once said the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug. The difference

between knowing about minister appreciation and actually doing it is the same difference in Twain's comparison.

I have noticed that a dog wags his tail when patted on the head or scratched under the chin. Ministers have smiles on their faces and in their voices when they are appreciated.

I think of the five churches that I pastored. Each church did things in their own way to say to my wife and me, "We love and appreciate you." My ministry has been enriched by these caring deacons, leaders and members. My eyes are wet with tears of gratitude and joy as I remember their kindness.

Our only regret in conducting acts of appreciation for minister(s) will be that we did not do it sooner or better.

For assistance in planning a special observance during Clergy Appreciation Month, contact Buckles at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3308 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 308. E-mail: mbuckles@mbcb.org. Focus on the Family (www.family.org) also carries clergy recognition materials.

Couple softens 'hardened' mission field

NENANA, Aka. (BP) — When Russ and Alice Sharrock first came from Toccoa, Ga., to Nenana, Alaska, in 1998 to assist with a Christian radio station, they were deeply burdened by the need for a new church — a church that would be vitally involved in the sometimes troubled local life of this Alaskan interior river village.

Naysayers both locally and in the lower 48 states predicted it would take five long years to establish a church in such a hardened mission field, Alice recounts now, two years later. Despite such warnings, and

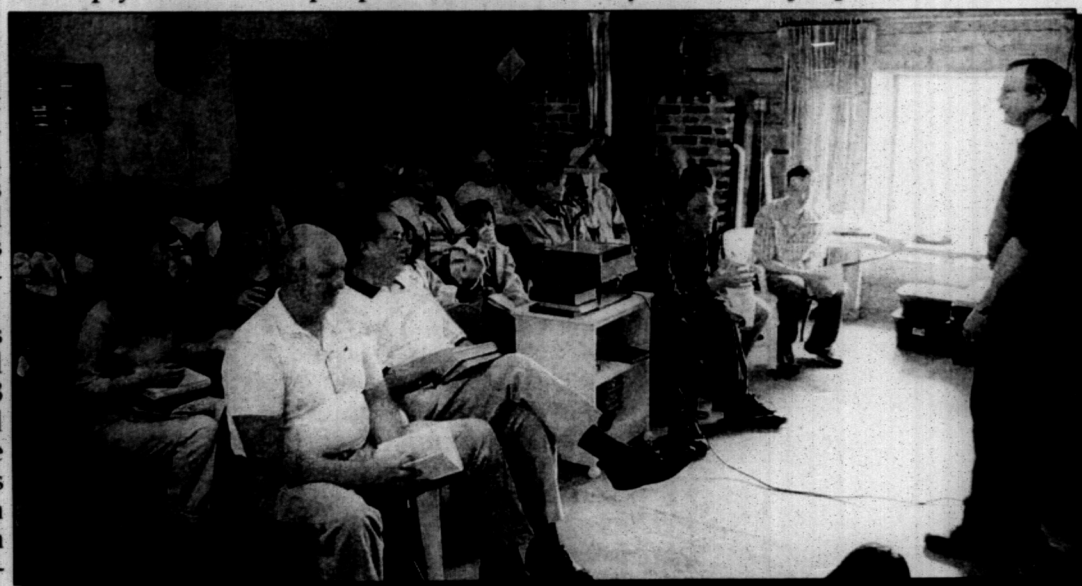
armed with the support of Baptists in Virginia and Missouri, as well as a survey team from Grace Church in Toccoa, Ga., the Sharrocks returned in 2000 as Nehemiah Project church planters and Nenana Community Church was born.

"We had a church within four weeks of stepping off the plane," Alice said. "At our first 'get-acquainted' meeting in the Civic Center — complete with a catered meal — we had over 120 people from this village of 412 total population."

"The youth on the Grace-to-Alaska Team [from the Toccoa church] had two very powerful dramas, a songwriter/musician had come along, and [Toccoa] pastor Joel Bradberry offered to give a strong Gospel message."

Unable to continue using the Civic Center for worship, they held services at the Sharrocks' tiny one-room cabin with a core group of 20. "We now have 30-45 people each Sunday

where Russ and Alice serve," Fowler said, "and they've gone to minister, share their lives and witness in an area where it's almost impossible to send fulltime people."



ALASKA OUTREACH — Gathering in a log cabin, pastor Russ Sharrock leads members of Nenana Community Church, a two-year-old church in the Alaskan interior, in Sunday worship. (BP photo courtesy of Nenana Community Church)

crammed into the great room of our larger log cabin," Alice said. "Visitors are coming all the time. And we have a vital youth group of 15-20 teens from Nenana as well as from the new Student Living Center."

Immediately before coming to Nenana, the Sharrocks studied at Midwestern Seminary in the Nehemiah Project for domestic church planting. Their church planting professor at Midwestern, Carrol Fowler, regards the type of work the Sharrocks are doing as crucial to fulfilling the Great Commission. "If we're going to reach the world, we have to be concerned about both the cities and rural areas. There was no evangelical message from Southern Baptists in the area

One of Nenana Community's greatest successes has been the fall Crossfire basketball camp, a cooperative effort with Crossfire Ministries of Asheville, N.C., that sprang out of a partnership with the Asheville-based Buncombe Baptist Association.

The camp, now in its second year, was attended by 61 youth from as far as 700 miles north and 300 miles south of Nenana. By the end of the Aug. 8-11 event, 41 professions of faith had been made by sports campers and parents.

The Sharrocks also give credit to others, including Virginia pastor William Gunter and his congregation at Webber Memorial Church in Chesterfield, Va. Gunter was the Sharrocks' pastor at First Church, Hillsville, Va., when Russ was called to ministry, and has continued to serve as a mentor to the Sharrocks during the past six years. He has also led Webber Memorial to continued involvement in the Sharrocks' ministry.

"Our VBS children usually support a particular mission during their week in late July, and last year [2001] the Sharrocks and Nenana was the

missions focus," Gunter said. "Russ and Alice produced a video of the Lord's work there that motivated our children to offer prayers, e-mail and financial gifts for the work."

This year, Webber Memorial also sent one of their members, schoolteacher Vickie Turner, as a summer missions volunteer.

"When the call to have a summer 'youth' worker came out, Vickie Turner — a motorcycle riding grandmother — felt a calling from God to respond," Gunter said. "We all were surprised in the beginning but we listened carefully as God revealed his plans. Vickie led our G.A.s [Girls in Action] and other groups to help with cake decorating kits for the ladies and gifts for the children. God knew that Russ and Alice

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Survey: Baptists profess

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A national survey of Southern Baptists worshippers found that nearly nine out of 10 church respondents had made a profession of faith in Christ, and the most popular age for making such a commitment was 12. Also, while most Southern Baptists are willing to share their faith, only about one in four are intentional about doing so — but 14% had led someone to faith in Christ during the previous year. The findings on conversion and witnessing among Southern Baptists come from a survey of 2,000 Southern Baptists who were part of a larger group participating in the broader "U.S. Congregational Life Survey" in April 2001. A total of 91% of the respondents were church members or regular participants. Phil Jones, director of research services for the North American Mission Board, said the survey of worshippers found that only 88% could affirm they "have had a conversion experience — that is, a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Christ and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior." The others responded either "no" (five percent) or did not answer at all (seven percent). The survey suggests, Jones said, that "a call for commitment should be an essential part of every worship service. While most people in Southern Baptist worship services have already made a decision for Christ, one of eight in attendance has not done so." The age of conversion in the survey ranged from ages 3 to 91, with age 12 marking both the middle of the distribution and the highest percentage (17 percent) of respondents. The second most popular year for professions of faith was age 10, with just over 8 percent of respondents. "Beyond age 12, the percentage of conversions steadily decreases," Jones said. "The conclusion is that beyond age 12 the likelihood of a conversion experience decreases."

Looking back

10 years ago

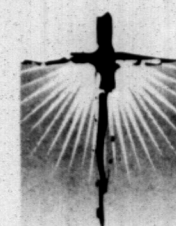
Florida governor Lawton Chiles pens an open letter commending Southern Baptists for their efforts helping the victims of Hurricane Andrew. Chiles calls Southern Baptist relief efforts "a great inspiration" and "abundant proof of the great compassion of Southern Baptists."

20 years ago

CBS television airs a documentary on Southwestern Seminary as part of the series, "For Our Time." The seminary was chosen, according to producer Robyn Mendelsohn, because it is the largest seminary in the world and its 75th anniversary celebration is planned this year.

50 years ago

The men's Bible class of First Church, Greenville, celebrates its 16th year of steady growth under its teacher, Kern Pratt. The class has grown from seven members to 189 during his tenure.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

Miss. gifts help plant Md./Del. churches

By Sharon Mager
Correspondent

COLUMBIA, Md. (Special) — Ken Rhodes and Paul Harrell arrived from Mississippi one hot day last month to meet with Baptist

ing partnership between MBCB and BCM/D, brought a lot more than fish stories.

They brought a check for \$100,000 from the Mississippi Baptist Convention, which they presented to Lee for BCM/D's church planting efforts. This is

In fact, Rhodes said, Mississippi Baptists are looking forward to learning from BCM/D's church planting expertise.

"The relationship between Mississippi Baptists and BCM/D, I think, has been the most positive partnership we have had," Rhodes said.

The reason the partnership is so positive, he observed, is due to the relationships that have developed between people. "We've had a tremendous relationship with church and convention staff, individuals, and associations," he said.

In addition to the generous monetary donations, Mississippi Baptist volunteers have been pouring into Maryland and Delaware to help with Vacation Bible Schools, Backyard Bible Clubs, construction projects, evangelism, resort ministry, and much more.

Likewise, volunteers from BCM/D have been traveling west to Mississippi helping with similar projects. "Our people don't usually think in terms of being the recipient," Rhodes said.

The people throughout BCM/D churches are changing that mindset. Rhodes said one area in which BCM/D folks have been especially helpful is multi-cultural ministry.

Late last year, a team of 21 ministers from the Prince George's Association flew into Mississippi for the weekend.

They led three church leadership conferences for African American church leaders on Saturday, then ministered at African American churches throughout the state on Sunday.

Rhodes said that made a huge impact on those Mississippi churches, and he expects more Mississippi associations to link up with BCM/D over the next year.

Also, while in the area recently, Rhodes and Harrell began dialogue with eight Delaware people to begin new association and church-to-church linkages in that state.

Rick Hancock, BCM/D's partnership missions consultant/specialist said the Mississippi Maryland/Delaware partnership is working so well that he believes it will serve as the model for future state relationships.

"Churches have been started, communities impacted, and souls saved because of our friends in the South," Hancock said.

Twenty-eight out of Mississippi's 72 associations are involved in the partnership, and that doesn't count the grassroots partnering going on.

Throughout Maryland and Delaware, churches are linking with other churches for a multitude of ministries that the conventions don't discover until later. Many of those relationships will continue without anyone else knowing about it this side of Heaven.

In a letter thanking Mississippi Baptists for their generosity, Lee wrote, "Churches have a new, fresh vision for their future because you helped 'jumpstart' them. You have been both a Paul and a Barnabas to us and we are eternally grateful. Thank you, Mississippi Baptists."

Mager is a BCM/D staff writer.



PLANTING CHURCHES — Ken Rhodes (left), director of missions mobilization for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), and Paul Harrell (right), MBCB coordinator of the ongoing partnership between Mississippi and Maryland/Delaware Baptists, present the third \$100,000 church-planting check to David Lee, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. (Special photo)

Convention of Maryland/Delaware (BCM/D) Executive Director David Lee, David Jackson, Rick Hancock, and several other consultant specialists at the Baptist Center in Columbia, Md.

They greeted each other good-naturedly and swapped some catfish and crab comments — but Rhodes, director of missions mobilization for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), and Harrell, who has coordinated the ongoing

the third check in the same amount that Mississippi has given to BCM/D over the course of the three years of partnership.

Rhodes said Mississippi is happy to be able to give the money. Church planting is a priority that Maryland/Delaware and Mississippi share, he said.

"That's the piece to which we're really excited about being able to contribute," Rhodes pointed out.

Christians targeted again in Pakistan slaughter

ISTANBUL (BP) — Armed gunmen attacked a Pakistani Christian welfare organization in Karachi, Sept. 25, killing seven Christians and leaving an eighth critically injured, according to a copyrighted article on the Compass Direct news.

According to local police, two unidentified attackers entered the third-floor offices of the Idare-e-Amn-O-Insaf, or Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), in central Karachi shortly after working hours began. The assailants apparently gagged all the office staff and tied them to chairs before shooting eight of them point-blank in the head then escaping.

Six of the victims died on the spot, while a seventh died later in the hospital and an eighth is still fighting for his life. An additional office worker who was beaten and tied up was not shot, however, enabling him to wriggle free a half-hour later to summon the police.

A doctor working adjacent to the unmarked IPJ offices at the time of the attack told the Reuters news agency he had seen two

gunmen. "They were wearing shirts and trousers and were clean-shaven," he said.

By late morning, hundreds of police had cordoned off the 12-story Rimpa Plaza building where the attack took place along Jinnah Road in the southern port city's central business district.

Although the shooting was Karachi's first attack against a Christian institution this year, suicide and car bomb attacks against Western targets in the city in May and June killed 11 foreigners and 16 Pakistanis.

The shooting was the fifth deadly assault on Christians in Pakistan since last October, when militant Islamist groups vowed to retaliate against President Pervez Musharraf's decision to support the U.S. war on terrorism. The toll from the string of anti-Christian attacks now comes to 39 killed and 75 injured.

Fifteen Christian worshipers and a policeman were massacred during an October 2001 worship service in Bahawalpur, with five more killed in a March grenade attack at the Islamabad Protestant Church.

Another 11 died in separate attacks in early August against the Murree Christian School and the Taxila Christian Hospital, both in the northern Punjab near Islamabad.

Those killed Sept. 25, all Christians on the IPJ staff, were identified as Aslam Martin, community coordinator; Mushtaq Roshan, accountant; Kamran Anjum, computer programmer; John Meneses, office worker; Iqbal Allah Rakha and Benjamin Talib, drivers; and Edwin Foster.

According to doctors at Karachi's main hospital, an eighth colleague, Robin Shareef, remains in critical condition in the intensive care unit. Doctors said the injured man needed surgery and faced permanent paralysis of the left side of his body from the injuries.

Meanwhile, the ninth office worker has collapsed and is now under hospital sedation, Reuters reported. Karachi police chief Syed Kamal Shah said investigators were keen to question this uninjured survivor, who reportedly fainted shortly after police began interrogating him.

Local Christian sources told Compass Direct that the sedated office worker, identified as Robin Peranditta, has been put under arrest as a possible suspect in the crime.

Founded in 1973, the IPJ has focused for three decades on obtaining labor rights for textile and city workers, along with representing other human rights issues for the poorest sectors of society. Jointly sponsored by Pakistan's Catholic and Protestant churches, the group has not been involved in religious politics.

According to police sources, however, a recent issue of the organization's magazine, "Jafakash" (Hard Worker), had dealt with Pakistan's controversial laws against blasphemy of Islam.

The attack has shattered recent claims by the Pakistan government that a massive crackdown in September had "smashed" the militant terrorist groups assaulting Christian and Western targets in the country.

Deadline nears for listing MBC meetings

A number of organizations traditionally schedule their meetings each year during the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC). If you would like for your organization's meeting during MBC to be listed in The Baptist Record on October 17, please send information on the meeting to baptistrecord@mbcb.org, or fax the information to (601) 292-3330. Mailing address: P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Deadline for submitting information is October 10. No information will be accepted over the telephone.

Crisis communication subject of conference

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Churches that plan today for crisis can help their community understand who they really are, and even speak for God, when disaster strikes, a popular Christian radio broadcaster told 80 ministers Sept. 20 at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

"Handling a crisis situation is not something we often think about. We think it will happen to someone else," said Ron Harris, host of the weekday "Morning Program" for KCBI Christian radio in Dallas. "Christians think public relations is something worldly, putting a glitzy spin on bad situations."

A church that is prepared to deal with crisis can do a good job of giving their community "an honest reflection of their heart for ministry ...and sometimes find they have a golden opportunity to speak for God" to a lost world, said Harris, who addressed church leaders

from nine denominations during the opening session of Southwestern's Crisis Communications for Ministers Conference, two days of workshops held at the seminary's J.W. MacGorman Conference Center.

In addition to a panel of local radio and television journalists, participants heard from an array of speakers with experience in crisis management, ranging from Al Meredith, pastor of Wedgwood Church, the Fort Worth congregation attacked by a gunman in 1999, and A. Larry Ross, a Dallas public relations consultant who works with clients such as Billy Graham, Campus Crusade for Christ and the Salvation Army.

Meredith addressed the preparedness of a pastor's heart for crisis, noting that appropriate responses and clear communication depend upon the pastor's relationship with the Lord. The Lord, Meredith said, is faithful and will bring the

church through the crisis.

"Like Corrie ten Boom said, when the train goes through the tunnel the lights go out, but you trust the engineer to bring you out the other side," Meredith said.

Recalling news reports earlier this year that Billy Graham had made a disparaging comment about Jews in the Nixon White House, Ross spoke to the challenge of managing the reputation of national ministries after negative publicity has emerged.

"A ministry's reputation is one of its most valuable assets," Ross continued. "The challenge for ministry management is that the decisions you make every day determine what happens when a crisis develops. You need to factor news and public relations concerns into every decision you make so you're not cleaning up a mess afterward."

"You must remember that you ultimately represent the kingdom of God, not just an

association, publication, church or denominational leadership," Ross said.



INTOUCH — Shaun Rabb (right), a bivocational pastor and news reporter for FOX 4 News in Dallas, answers a question Sept. 21 during a media panel discussion at the Crisis Communications for Ministers Conference at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. (BP photo by Richard D. McCormack)

PADDLING HARD AND GOING NOWHERE

In September 2002, there was an interesting little piece in the news about a young guy who was trying to paddle a canoe across the Atlantic. He had left the shore of the United States on his way to the coast of France. He had no sail, no motor, and just the strength of his own muscles and the length of his own endurance.

According to the news, he had been doing quite well and was making good progress. Then, something happened. The winds picked up and were blowing directly into his face. The winds, 30 miles and above, were blowing against him. In spite of the winds, the young man, who was on a personal mission, kept on paddling. In fact, he paddled even harder. Some of his companions following along on the trip tried to get him to stop, but he would not. They watched him rowing against the winds and the waves but going nowhere.

How many of us have felt like that at one point or another? We give back the best we have got only to find that we are standing still. It is important to realize what this young fellow discovered out in the middle of the ocean. Often times holding your ground is a significant achievement. Staying where you are and not being blown off the map may take even more effort and endurance than the times when you are making great progress.

Some churches are paddling hard with little results. Most folks have heard the statistics that apply not only to Mississippi churches but generally apply Southern Baptist Convention wide and even across denominational lines. About two-thirds or three-fourths of our churches are



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

plateaued or in decline. Most of us immediately interpret that to mean that all of these churches are in bad shape and have either lost their vision, or their devotion, or their concern for others. While that is true in some cases, a close examination will discover that some of these churches are doing an amazing job of holding their own. Like the fellow in the boat in the Atlantic who cannot control the wind's direction, there are circumstances that bring about church decline. This is not just rationalization of the situation — it is realization!

When a church sits in a community of 8,000 and over a decade the population drops from 8,000 to 6,000 or 5,000, and the church is holding its own numerically, something good has got to be happening there. Some churches are located in an area where the population is aging. House after house that used to have a family of five, six, or seven that would attend church now is occupied by the one remaining mate. It is pretty remarkable when you can hold your own.

I am confident that there are situations that could change the direction of the church if they could find the direction that the wind of God was blowing and go with Him. In some cases, if the folks in the church would stop paddling against each other they could move ahead. It is important to remember that there are wonderful congregations who are

doing a great job by holding on to the faith and not being blown off the map.

Some families are paddling so hard just to hold on. Some families are beginning, some in mid-range with their children, and some are in later years, but they still battle to hold it together. I know all of us live in a world of time restraints that seem to keep us on the edge. Families have school activities, church, and work. Then, there is homework, housework, yard work and what you did not get done at work-work. I know a lot of families that every day needs to be about 28 hours rather than 24 hours. It is not just young families with a bunch of kids. It is all families.

Recently, a friend told me he was going to give me some advice — "Anything you want to do or anywhere you want to go, get it done before you retire." Not knowing what he was talking about, I asked, "Why do you say that?" He said, "Because when you retire you won't have time to do anything." Then, he began to explain how busy you are in the retirement years. Families are stretched and stressed out! Only by the grace of God can they keep on course paddling through all the headwinds blowing against them to stay intact.

Individuals are paddling hard to stay in the same spot. Everywhere they turn it seems that wind is blowing against them. They try to prepare for retirement believing they are

doing the right thing. All of a sudden the economy drops, the stock market dips, and they will have to work until they are 93. Some wrestle with medical issues and insurance premiums. Many cannot get insurance coverage and others cannot afford to keep insurance. The only thing they can hope to do is to stay healthy until they die. Then, you see individuals where everybody in their family is working and they still end up with a combined paycheck that lasts about 26 days of a 30-day month. They are literally on the brink of crashing and paddling hard to stay in the same place. Yet, with faith, grit, and determination many of these folks keep on paddling to stay where they are.

Whether or not the guy makes it across the Atlantic is yet to be determined, but there are some excellent lessons that all of us can learn from his account.

Stay with the stuff. Keep at it. Don't throw in the towel. As Paul would write and say, "We shall reap if we faint not."

Realize that maintaining is often a great accomplishment in life. Do not just find some sparkling example of great achievement and think you are a failure because you have not done what the other guy did. The other guy may not be facing the winds you are. You may be the true success.

Hold on to hope. You may expend your energy, wonder about the future, and wonder if the winds will ever change, but for the believer we have a confidence in the Lord that is expressed not in empty hope but in a positive realization that the Lord will come through. In Romans 5:2-5, Paul tells us to "Rejoice in hope, experience brings on hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

God bless you as you keep on paddling.

Reps rap abortion training

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. House of Representatives voted Sept. 25 to clarify that the government cannot discriminate against health care professionals and entities that object to providing abortion services.

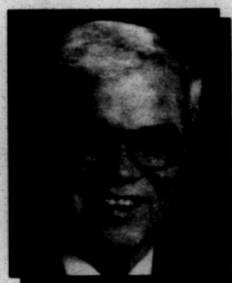
Passage of the Abortion Non-discrimination Act came in a 229-189 vote, with 37 Democrats joining 192 Republicans in the majority. Twenty-four GOP members voted with 164 Democrats and an independent against the measure. The Senate, however, is not expected to act on the bill before it adjourns. The target date for adjournment is Oct. 11.

The legislation amends the Public Health Act to make clear the federal government and any state or local government that receives federal funds are barred from discriminating against any medical professional or entity that declines to perform, pay for, or provide coverage of an abortion. It clarifies health care entities include hospitals, provider-sponsored organizations, health maintenance organizations and insurance plans.

2002 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

OCTOBER 29-30, 2002 • FIRST CHURCH, JACKSON

Featured Speakers



D.L. Lowrie



Frank Pollard



Jerry Rankin



Bob Reccord



P.J. Scott

MISSIONS: Making the Difference in Two Worlds October 29, 2002 • Tuesday Morning, First Session

8:25	Prelude	Organist/Pianist, FBC, Jackson
8:30	Sounding of the Gavel	Frank Pollard
8:35	Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:20-26	Morris Baker
	Prayer	M.C. Johnson
8:45	Organization of the Convention Recognition and Seating of Messengers	Frank Pollard
	Recognition of Special Guests & Correspondence	Frank Pollard
	Report of Committee on Order of Business	Bill Hardin
	Recognition of Tellers and Credentials Committee	Frank Pollard
	Welcome	Bill Temple
8:55	Congregational Praise	Larry Black
9:00	Bible Treasure	D.L. Lowrie
9:25	Report of Committee on Committees	Randy Lewman
9:30	Presentation of Resolutions	Frank Pollard
9:35	Election of President	Bill Hardin
9:45	Congregational Praise	Larry Black
9:50	Christian Action Commission Report	Jimmy Porter
10:00	Baptist Children's Village Report	Ronny Robinson
10:10	Convention Board Report	Wayne VanHorn
10:30	Congregational Praise	Larry Black
10:45	Choral Praise	Sanctuary Choir, FBC, Jackson
11:00	President's Address: All the Difference	Frank Pollard
	I Corinthians 15	
11:30	Benediction	Al Carden

MISSIONS: Making the Difference in Two Worlds October 29, 2002 • Tuesday Afternoon, Second Session

1:30	Prelude	Organist/Pianist, FBC Jackson
1:35	Sounding of the Gavel	Bill Hardin
	Congregational Praise	Bobby Sanderson
	Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20	Ben Nash
	Prayer	Sandra Nash
1:45	Bible Treasure	D.L. Lowrie
2:10	Results of Election of President (Followed by second ballot if needed)	Bill Hardin
2:15	Missions Moment	VIDEO
2:20	Congregational Praise	Bobby Sanderson
2:25	Message	Jerry Rankin
2:55	Business Session	
	Presentation of 2003 Budget	Bobby Kirk
	Election of Convention Officers	
	Presentation of Resolutions	
	Miscellaneous Business	
3:25	Report of Board of Ministerial Education	Wayne Marshall
3:30	Business Session	
	Election of Convention Officers	
	Report of Constitution and Bylaws Committee	
	Miscellaneous Business	
4:00	Congregational Praise	Bill Britton
4:05	Choral Praise	Sanctuary Choir, FBC, Olive Branch
		Norma Gerrell
4:15	Special Music	
4:20	Convention Sermon: Knowing Him - Philippians 3:10	P.J. Scott
4:50	Benediction	R.T. Buckley

MISSIONS: Making the Difference in Two Worlds October 29, 2002 • Tuesday Evening, Third Session

6:30	Choral Praise	Mississippi Singing Churchmen
6:40	Sounding of the Gave	Frank Pollard
	Congregational Praise	Graham Smith
	Scripture Reading: Romans 1:14-1	David Alexander
	Prayer	Paula Smith
6:50	Choral Praise	Mississippi Singing Churchmen
6:55	Final Presentation of Resolutions	Frank Pollard
7:00	Missions Moment	VIDEO
7:05	Bible Treasure	D.L. Lowrie
7:30	Recognition of Guests, New Workers & Missionaries	Jim Futral
7:45	Congregational Praise	Graham Smith
7:50	Choral Praise	Mississippi Singing Churchmen
8:00	Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Emphasis	Jim Futral
8:45	Benediction	Neron Smith

MISSIONS: Making the Difference in Two Worlds October 30, 2002 • Wednesday Morning, Fourth Session

8:15	Prelude	Mississippi College Symphonic Winds
8:35	Sounding of the Gavel	Ernest Sadler
8:40	Congregational Praise	L. Lavon Gray
	Scripture Reading: Revelation 14:6-7	Sharon Johnston
	Prayer	Vincent Johnston
8:50	Bible Treasure	D.L. Lowrie
9:10	Report of Education Commission	Bill Hurt
9:15	Memorial Service	Frank Harmon
9:25	Choral Praise	Mississippi College Singers
9:30	Introduction of College Presidents	Frank Pollard
9:40	Mississippi College Report	Lee G. Royce
9:50	Missions Moment	VIDEO
9:55	Business Session	
	Adoption of 2003 Budget	Bobby Kirk
	Committee on Nominations Report	Aubrey Boone
	Time, Place, and Preacher Committee Report	Kiely Young
	Resolutions Committee Report	Andy Taggart
	Miscellaneous Business	
10:50	Congregational Praise	L. Lavon Gray
10:55	Missions Mobilization	Ken Rhodes
11:10	Choral Praise	Mississippi College Singers
11:15	Message	Bob Reccord
11:45	Benediction	Ken Lyle
	Choral Postlude	Mississippi College Singers

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION OFFICERS

President - Frank Pollard, Jackson
First Vice President - Bill Hardin, Picayune
Second Vice President - Ernest Sadler, Pascagoula
Recording Secretary - Gus Merritt, Newton Assoc.
Recording Secretary - Michael Weeks, Olive Branch

COMMITTEE ON ORDER OF BUSINESS

Bill Hardin, Picayune, chairman
Bobby Douglas, Cleveland
Curtis Ferrell, Holly Springs
William R. (Bill) Herman, Newhebron
John Legg, Clinton
Gordon H. Sansing, Forest

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 3, 2002

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

BAPTIST HYMNALS NEEDED FOR AFRICAN SEMINARY

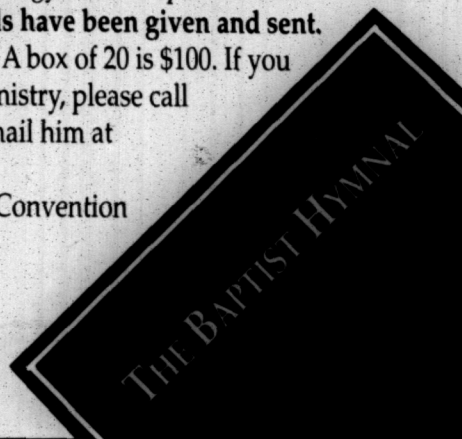
The only seminary in Africa offering a graduate degree in church music is in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Currently, most African church choirs sing only the melody of hymns from memory, for they have only the words without music.

Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department consultant, after teaching a course at this seminary, has a burden to provide our fellow Baptist musicians in Africa with 5,000 copies of the 1991 Baptist Hymnal. Their choirs could then proclaim the theology of our Baptist faith in beautiful four-part harmony! As of August, 3,000 hymnals have been given and sent.

You can help with a financial gift. One hymnal is \$5. A box of 20 is \$100. If you or your church group would like to participate in this ministry, please call Jimmy McCaleb at (601) 292-3273, 1 (800) 748-1651 or E-mail him at jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

Checks may be made out to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and mailed to:

Jimmy McCaleb
MBCB
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205



Youth Ministers Workshop



November 11-13, 2002
Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville

**"Hey, It's More than
Survival or Success;
It's Significance!"**

***In a world focused on Survivor and Success,
student ministry must be centered
in Significance.***



Barry St. Clair
Reach Out Youth Solutions
Atlanta



Chuck Gartman
Youth Ministry Services
Howard Payne University
Brownwood, Texas



Kevin Williams
KW Ministries
Columbus



Myrna Gregory
LifeWay Christian Resources
Brandon

For more info, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305 (Jackson).

MISSISSIPPI STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE January 27-28, 2003 Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo

One State Evangelism Conference with two tracks
Opening session Monday 1:30 p.m.
No registration required

WOMEN'S TRACK Radical Christianity – Just for Women

Monday, January 27

3 p.m. Prayer & Testimony Patsy Bozeman
"The Call to Prayer" Jaye Martin

Tuesday, January 28

9 a.m. Prayer & Testimony Jean Atkins
"The Call to Power" Jaye Martin

1:30 p.m. Prayer & Testimony Audrey Hector
"The Call to Purpose" Jaye Martin



Jaye Martin
Women's
Consultant
NAMB

For more info, call the Mississippi WMU: 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3324

Mississippi Delta MissionsFEST 2002 FOLLOW-UP, Tchula, Miss. November 16, 2002

MissionsFEST 2002

Come help complete the weatherization project (light construction & home repairs), community cleanup, prayer garden and prayerwalk. There is no cost to participate. Meals are on your own.

Participants must register with Mississippi WMU by **11/8/02**

MissionsFEST FOLLOW-UP Registration

(Group) Leader _____ Church _____

Address _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ (e-mail) _____

No. in Group (male) _____ (female) _____

Groups/individuals are responsible for transportation to ministry sites. Please copy this form and register groups separately for each ministry project.

Weatherization _____ Comm. Cleanup _____ Prayerwalking _____ Prayer Garden _____

Mail to: MS WMU, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Call 1-800-748-1651, ext. 316

Sharing Christ In Love

Lay Missions Conference

First Baptist Church, Jackson
October 28, 2002

Missions Banquet
Keynote Speaker

Mickey Caison
Adult Volunteer Mobilization, NAMB
Celebrating 25 Years
of Disaster Relief

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Mission Strategy Team

RESERVATION FORM (DEADLINE: OCTOBER 25, 2002)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ dinner reservations at \$8.50 per person.

Please complete form and mail to: Men's Ministry Department, MBCB, Lay
Missions Banquet, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530

Call Men's Ministry for more info: 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3334

BAPTISTS

Interest Conferences - 3 p.m.

Agricultural Missions
Educational Missions
Volunteers in Missions
Construction Missions
Campers on Mission
Literacy Missions
Restorative Justice

Missions Banquet - 5 p.m.

Dinner
Music
Recognitions
Message

THE SUIT PROJECT

Mississippi Baptists say "Merry Christmas" to pastors in the Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota Conventions

What is it?

For over 38 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work.

What can you do?

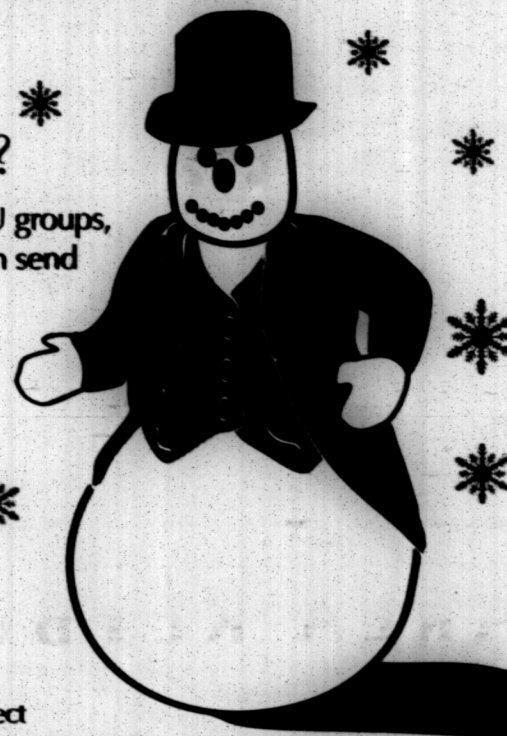
Men's Ministry, RA, and WMU groups, individuals, churches, etc., can send their gifts payable to:

Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board
Attention:
Men's Ministry Department
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Cost: \$130 per suit

Designate on your check: Suit Project

SPECIAL MINISTRY FOR THE PASTOR'S WIVES
If funds are available, we will send clothing gift certificates for the wives as we did last year.



Sponsored by the
Men's Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

PRESCHOOL/ CHILDREN'S LEADERSHIP FESTIVAL 2002 COST \$10 EACH



LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The classes offered are approved for 7 hours of staff development credit by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Questions? Call Don Hicks: 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3287

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, NOV 15, 2002

3:15 p.m. Registration Opens

4:30-5:20
Linda Reeves How to Handle Bullies
Todd Capps VBS Preview
Jan Marler TeamKid-Preschool
Missy Algood The Importance of Play in Preschool
Barbara Brown Fun Resources... Teaching "Cool" for Kids

5:30-6:30 Dinner Break

6:45-8:00 General Session - Andrew and Tracy Orr

8:15-9:05
Todd Capps Helping Children Learn to Pray
Jan Marler TeamKid-Children
Missy Algood Making Group Time Fun for Preschoolers
Cathy Jeffcoats How to have a Family Friendly Church
Ann Rials Children Growing Toward Mission Lifestyle
Ken Thomas Games with Purpose



SATURDAY, NOV 16, 2002

8:15-9:05 a.m.
Todd Capps Guiding Children's Behavior
Jan Marler Top 10 Questions New Leaders Ask
Jan Halford How to Have Fun with Music and Children
Judy Hicks Using the Bible with Preschoolers
Angie Boydston Security & Legal Issues in Preschool
Cathy Jeffcoats Keeping Your Faith Fresh (leaders)

9:15-10:45 Gen. Session/Brunch- Andrew & Tracy Orr

11-11:50
Todd Capps Children and Salvation
Jan Marler Guiding Preschool Behavior
Cathy Jeffcoats Sixth Graders Are Different Animals
Barbara Brown Learning Styles-Children
Ken Thomas Ministry Through Special Events
Angie Boydston Brain Development (Do Babies Matter?)

12-12:50 p.m.
Todd Capps Developing Bible Skills with Children
Jan Marler Common Calamities in Children's Ministry
Ann Rials When a Hug Doesn't Fix the Hurt
Melinda McAdams Children and Worship
Missy Algood Ages & Stages: Developing Preschoolers
Jan Halford How to Have Fun with Music & Preschoolers

Annual Conference of Mississippi Baptist Ministers' Wives

October 28, 2002, 1:00-4:30 p.m.

Fifth Floor

First Baptist Church, Jackson

There is no cost for this conference. In order for us to better prepare, please pre-register, even if you will not need child care. Contact Matt Buckles, Pastor/Leadership Development Dept., PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530 or fax 601-714-7426 or E-mail kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

For more information
call 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305

Child care will be provided by First Baptist Church, Jackson. They will need to know number and ages of children, before October 21. If needed, the phone number for FBC, Jackson, is 601-949-1900.

Featuring

- Dorothy Henderson – "Hospitality Evangelism"
- Kay Faulkenbery – "Growing Strong Through the Seasons of Life"
- Betty Gregory – "Serving with a Positive Attitude"
- Music – Michael and Yana Allen



GA Missions Madness "Planting God's Garden"

Saturday, November 2, 2002
Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Jackson

Cost: \$5

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Registration for GA Missions Madness, November 2, 2002

Church _____ City _____ Assoc. _____
I am enclosing \$_____ (\$5) per person for the registration fee for _____ GAs and leaders. There must be one leader for every five girls. The early registration deadline is October 18. If there is still space available after the deadline date, registrations will be accepted at a cost of \$7.50 per person. Mail your payment with the registration form to: WMU Department, MBCB, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530. Make check payable to MBCB for the GA Missions Madness event.
Person making reservation _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Daytime phone _____ Evening phone _____

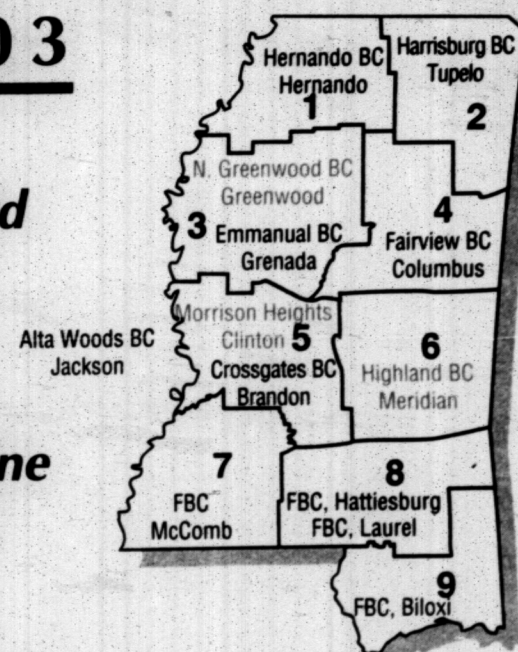
For more information, please contact the Mississippi WMU
at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3322.

AREA KEYBOARD FESTIVALS - 2003

AREA	LOCATION	FESTIVAL LEADER	PHONE
	Thursday, January 23, 2003 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	C-Church, H-Home	
Area 2	Harrisburg BC, Tupelo, 4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd. (All Categories)	Diane Smith	C-662-842-6917
Area 4	Fairview BC, Columbus, 127 Airline Rd. (All Categories)	Slater Murphy	C-662-328-2924
Area 5	Morrison Heights BC, Clinton, 201 Morrison Dr. (Categories I, IA only)	Carol Durham	C-601-924-5620 H-601-924-0469
Area 6	Highland BC, Meridian, 3400 27th St. (All Categories)	June Williams	C-601-482-0191
Area 7	FBC, McComb, 1700 Delaware Ave. (All Categories)	Lavon Gray	C-601-684-2971
Area 8	FBC, Hattiesburg, 510 West Pine St. (All Categories)	Kathy Vail	H-601-264-7443
Area 9	FBC, Laurel, 607 W. Fifth Street (All Categories)	Mark Moore	C-601-544-0100
	Friday, January 24, 2003 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.		
Area 1	Hernando BC, Hernando, 11 E. Center St. (All Categories)	Barry Tweedy	C-662-429-6361
Area 5	Crossgates BC, Brandon, 8 Crosswoods Rd. (Categories II, IIA, III, IV only)	Tommy Creel	C-601-825-2562
Area 9	FBC, Biloxi, 1560 Poppas Ferry Road (All Categories)	Leon Bedsole	C-228-396-8500
	Saturday, January 25, 2003 - 9:30 a.m. - noon		
Area 3	Emmanuel BC, Grenada, 245 Meadow Brook Rd. (All Categories)	Barry Worrell	C-662-226-5316
Area 4	North Greenwood BC, Greenwood, 615 Grand Blvd. (All Categories)	Patricia Ethridge	C-662-453-2810
Area 5	Alta Woods BC, Jackson, 168 Colonial Dr. (Categories II, IIA, III, IV only)	Tommy Smith Wyndy South	H-601-957-3615

2003 Area Keyboard Festival Locations

Registration Deadline
December 9, 2002



Gulfshore Music Leadership Conference

July 10-12
2003

Gulfshore
Baptist
Assembly



FEATURING:

Dr. Calvin Miller, *Samford University*
Carol Tornquist, *Piano*
Carolyn Hamlin, *Organ*

CLASSES FOR:

Praise Teams/Praise Bands
Youth Music
Preschool/Children's Music
Handbells
Orchestra
Bivocational Ministers of Music

Start planning now to have the children and youth from your church and studio participate in the 2003 Area Keyboard Festivals.

Area 1: FBC, Hernando, 11 E. Center St. (All Categories)
Area 2: Harrisburg BC, Tupelo, 4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd. (All Categories)
Area 3: Emmanuel BC, Grenada, 245 Meadow Brook Rd. (All Categories)
Area 4: North Greenwood BC, Greenwood, 615 Grand Blvd. (All Categories)
Area 5: Crossgates BC, Brandon, 8 Crosswoods Rd. (Categories II, IIA, III, IV only)
Area 6: Highland BC, Meridian, 3400 27th St. (All Categories)
Area 7: FBC, McComb, 1700 Delaware Ave. (All Categories)
Area 8: FBC, Hattiesburg, 510 West Pine St. (All Categories)
Area 9: FBC, Laurel, 607 W. Fifth Street (All Categories)

Pray this day for...

October 4-17, 2002

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1 (800) 787-7729 (PRAY)

"Prayer is more than something I do, it is something God does through me."

Ben Jennings

For: (1) "On Mission to Share Jesus" (Evan. Emphasis); (2) Pray for parents in China. The one-child policy of the last decade has resulted in a sociological phenomenon referred to as "one mouth, six pockets." Millions of children in China are growing up without siblings, but with the keen attention of six adults: two parents and four grandparents.

For: (1) Church Related Vocations Banquet, Mississippi College, Clinton, (PLD) (2) Pray for two national pastors in Chile, Pastor C and Pastor S, who offer leadership to the National Cell Team and the National Cell Church Network.

For: (1) Student Day at the Baptist Building, Jackson (PLD); (2) Missionaries Paul and Aureo Trinh in the Dominican Republic, ask us to "pray that Mr. L., who has been attending our church for several months will soon commit his life to the Lord. He is still asking the Lord for more 'proofs.'"

For: (1) Baptist Building AT HOME DAYS 9th - 11th; (2) Larry Allen is the Cooperative Missions Ministries team leader in Southfield, Michigan. Pray for a church planting movement across this state where the lost population is 7.8 million souls. There are 320 churches trying to reach a state with nearly 10 million people.

On September 12th, the south Sudan town of Lui was bombed by the Government of Sudan. Lui is the home of a hospital operated by Samaritan's Purse, Franklin Graham's relief organization and the only hospital for an estimated population of 400,000 people. Some patients often walk 15 miles for medical care. Pray for their safety.

For: (1) Church Media Library State Conference, FBC, Kosciusko (CS); (2) "God's Plan, My Part," State Women's Retreat, Gulfshore; (3) MS Baptist Conference of the Deaf, Garaywa (CPD); (4) Church Related Vocations Banquet, Blue Mt. College (PLD)

Christians in a Last Frontier country do not have opportunities for fellowship with other believers. Authorities often relocate new Christians to isolated areas where their witness will impact fewer people. Pray for opportunities to congregate and share the Word of God with hundreds of thousands of lost people.

For: (1) World Hunger (CAC Emphasis); (2) In Lahore, Pakistan, a city with beautiful old Christian churches with large congregations, 95 percent of 9 million people are Muslims. Christians often believe the Muslims are impossible to reach with the gospel, so few even try. Pray that boundaries between the Christian and Muslim communities will fall.

For: (1) FAITH Clinic, Michael Memorial Church, Gulfport (SS & Lifeway); (2) Pray today for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; (3) Pray for the Baptist Children's Village in Jackson and its branches in other locations. Pray especially for Bro. Ronny Robinson, Executive Director, who has had several foot surgeries in recent months.

Pray for the many families in Sichuan, China who continue to suffer from the effects of abortions. Sichuan women had over 1,668,000 abortions from 1996 through 2000.

Pray for your children. You've modeled a believing lifestyle to your children. They've accepted Christ. But what happens if, as they make their own lives, they begin to stray from God? What if their lifestyle isn't one you'd choose for them? What can you do? Pray. Ask God to do whatever it takes to draw your child back to Himself.

For: (1) Preschool/Children Discipleship & Family Summit, Garaywa, Clinton (D&FM); (2) MBRA Golf Tournament, Castlewoods Golf Course, Brandon (D&FM); (3) Pray for President Boris Trajkovski of Macedonia (Southeastern Europe, north of Greece).

A fine young woman named S. has been attending Overspill Baptist Church in Zimbabwe for months. She lived with a non-Christian aunt and uncle who began to hassle her about going to church. She felt she had to move out, so she rented a small room, but has no furniture or means to cook. Pray for her to know what to do.

For: (1) Christian Education Clinic, Longview Heights BC, Olive Branch (D&EM); (2) Special Ministries Retreat, Garaywa (SS); (3) Pray today for President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil (eastern South America).

North Mississippi Women's Retreat

"A seeking heart: rediscovering true worship"

March 14-15, 2003

Central Hills Baptist Retreat Center

Featuring Sarah Groves, author & musician, Fayetteville, Ark.



Sarah Groves

A women's retreat full of Bible study, prayer and worship times.

Check in: 4 p.m. Friday, March 14

Dinner: 5:30 p.m.

Worship Celebration I: 7 p.m.

Ends with lunch 1 p.m., Saturday, March 15

Study guides will be available for purchase at retreat.

Sponsored by the Miss. WMU. For more info contact Kathy Burns at 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3324 or e-mail at kburns@mbcb.org

North Miss. Women's Retreat Registration

Church _____ Association _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Contact Person _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Number of Women _____ X cost per person = Total enclosed \$ _____

(Please list the names of women on separate piece of paper)

Cost: \$50 (Lodging, 3 meals and registration)

Deadline: Friday, March 7, 2003

MAIL TO: Women's Retreat at Central Hills, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Youth choir of Wade Church, Wade, participated in a choir tour during the month of July. The choir with 35 students and 11 adults performed at churches in Prattville, Ala.; Fayetteville, Ga.; and the Georgia Baptist Children's Village. Philip Price is minister of education and youth. Bill Barton is pastor.

Holly Church, Alcorn Association, held United Through It All, a special 9-11 memorial and recognition service on Sept. 8. There were 167 in attendance, with 20 representatives of the local public and volunteer fire departments, city and county law enforcement officials, local housing authority, and ambulatory and emergency medical personnel and nurses. Tony Morrow is pastor.

Community Sing will be held at Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, Oct. 19, at 6 p.m. Featured musicians will be the Goldenaires. For additional information, call (662) 895-2661.

Trinity Church, Pearl, celebrated high attendance Sunday on Sept. 15. Trinity Trio provided the entertainment. Kenny Goff is pastor.

Dockery Church, Cleveland, will celebrate its 100 years of service on Nov. 4, 2-4 p.m. A reception will be held in fellowship hall. For additional information, call Pat Weeks at (662) 843-8949 or Edna Roberson at (662) 843-8515.

Kevin Spencer and Friends, a southern country gospel group, will be in concert at Leesburg Church, Morton, at 7 p.m. on Oct. 6. For additional information, call Jeff Jones at (601) 267-5503.

Acteens and GAs of Oakhurst Church,

Clarksdale, began the new year in missions with a weekend trip, Sept. 6 and 7, to Central Hill Baptist Retreat. Donna Guthrie is the GA/Acteen coordinator.

Sylvarena Church, Wesson, organized on Sept. 17, 1898, celebrated homecoming on Sunday, Sept. 8. Honored for their years of service were (left to right) Claude Lowery (treasurer for 14 years; deacon), Sheryl Roberts Montgomery (pianist



Youth Choir of Wade Church, Wade

Vacation Bible School was held at Puckett Church, Puckett, July 8-12 with an average attendance of 120.



Honorees of Sylvarena Church, Wesson



Trinity Trio, Trinity Church, Pearl

since mid 60's; organist since 2001), Dan Weeks (deacon; church training director), and Ann Slay Weeks (training union director). All have served on numerous committees and have been members since the late 1950's.



VBS Participants of Puckett Church, Puckett



GAs and Acteen of Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale



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(*I repent.*)
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from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ
into my life. From this time
on, I want to live in a loving
relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.*)

*But as many as received him, to
them he gave the right to become
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who believe in his name (John
1:12).*

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Upchurch and Pickard

Springdale Church, West, held a deacon ordination service for Tony Holder on Aug. 25. Pictured (from left) are Mark Wicker, pastor; and Tony and Misty Holder.

Erma Childs was honored at Holcomb Church, Holcomb, for over 45 years of teaching Sunday School. Presenting her with a plaque of appreciation is Tommy Liddell, Sunday School superintendent.



Liddell and Childs

Patrick Sanders was recently ordained as a deacon of Fayette Church, Fayette. Pictured (from left) are Eddie King, pastor; Sanders; and Frank Spillman, chairman of deacons.



Laymen of Northcrest Church, Meridian

Bennie H. Boone preached the ordination message; and Terry L. Upchurch gave the charge to Mt. Olive Church. Pictured (from left) are Upchurch and Pickard.

Northcrest Church, Meridian, licensed Michael Gibson, Nelson Smith, and Jim Harris to the ministry on Sept. 15. Pictured (from left)

Recognition awards were recently given to longstanding members at Camp Ground Church, Water Valley. Receiving awards were L. D. Jones, 47 years as deacon; Floyd McGehee, 37 years as

deacon; Lloyd Defer, 23 years as superintendent of Sunday School; Shirley Defer, 27 years as church treasurer. Pictured (from left) are Myra White; Emon White, pastor; Mary McGehee; Floyd McGehee; Lloyd Defer; Shirley Defer; Nancy Jones; and L.D. Jones.



King, Sanders, and Spillman



Mark Wicker, pastor, and Tony & Misty Holder



Longstanding Members of Camp Ground Church, Water Valley

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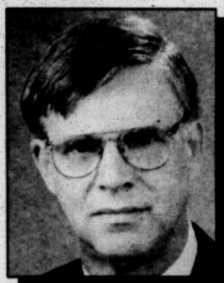
BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

HOMECOMINGS & REVIVAL DATES

Wesley "Wes" Shinn, associate professor of law; **Gordon Christy**, associate professor of law; and **Shirley T. Kennedy**, legal writing instructor and coordinator of the law school's Child Advocacy Program; will be joining the faculty of the Mississippi College School of Law for academic year 2002-03. Shinn, associate professor of law, will teach courses in property and secured transactions. He received his education at McNeese State University, Tulane University Law School, and Harvard Law School. Christy, associate professor of law, received his education at the University of Texas at Austin and post graduate study in philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Kennedy is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and MC school of law.



Shinn



Christy

Mississippi College School of Law has announced the promotion of **Mark C. Modak-Truran** to associate professor of law. Modak-Truran recently received his degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School. He currently serves as co-chair of the Section on Law and Religion of the Association of American Law Schools.

New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) student enlistment office will sponsor a Preview Weekend for prospective sem-

inary students on Oct. 31-Nov. 2. Student preview weekends are held two times through the year and provide interested students the opportunity to experience seminary life firsthand. As guests, prospective students will tour the campus, meet faculty and staff, and learn more about admission requirements, degree programs, cost of attendance, financial aid, scholarships, housing, student organizations, and other important information about life at NOBTS. Activities available include opportunities to attend classes, a special chapel service, meetings with professors in the prospective student's area of interest, a Campus Life Fair, a special reception at the President's home and a dinner on the town with a faculty member.

Registration/check-in will begin at 4:30 p.m. at River City Café. Students must pre-register by Oct. 24, for the upcoming weekend. The cost for the weekend is \$25 per person. This fee pays for two-night stay and meals Thursday night, all day on Friday and breakfast on Saturday morning. Those interested can receive registration forms by contacting the office of Student Enlistment at 1-800-NOBTS-01, ext. 3303.



Kennedy



Modak-Truran

Center Grove, Maben: Oct. 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; fellowship dinner following morning service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Q. Wilson, Harperville, and former director of State Missions with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Billy Hester, Maben, music; Joel D. Hudson, pastor.

Juniper Grove, Poplarville: Oct. 6-9; Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Argile Smith, evangelist; Andy Hadley, music.

East Philadelphia, Philadelphia: Oct. 6-9; Bruce Ashford, Wake Forest, N.C., evangelist; William Smith, Philadelphia, music.

Enon, Grenada: Oct. 6; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; Ray Burks, former pastor, will bring the morning service; noon meal; Fletcher Moorman, pastor.

Harrisville (Simpson): Oct. 13; Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall followed by singing in afternoon; Tommy Anderson, Lake, guest speaker; Steve Coleman, Rayville, La., music; Ron Burch, pastor.

Calvary, Braxton: Oct. 13; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; lunch; and afternoon service; Jimmy Ray, speaker; Jeff

Wedgeworth, music; Maurice Bryant, pastor.

New Goodhope (Scott): Oct. 13; 10:30 a.m.; dinner served following services; Fred and Judy Parker will be honored; Brian Parkman, Pulaski, speaker.

Lakeshore, Jackson: 25th anniversary; Oct. 27; Gary Bowlin, first pastor, morning message; followed by dinner on the grounds and musical inspiration.

STAFF CHANGES

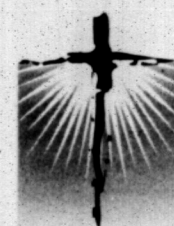


Waits

David Waits has accepted the call as pastor at Holcomb Church, Holcomb. He has served in various churches for 17 years.

Enon Church, Grenada, has called Fletcher Moorman as pastor. He is a graduate of Blue Mountain College and New Orleans Seminary.

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GROWING CHURCH IN SELMA, Alabama seeking Music/Education Minister to lead in blended worship and to aid in continuing church growth. Resumes will be accepted until October 31, 2002. Send resume to Central Baptist Search Committee, 48 County Rd. 16, Selma, AL 36701 or email to brodoug@cbcn.net

Letter to the Editor

Editor:

Across the nation at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 6, men, women, boys, and girls will form a Life Chain in support of efforts to ban abortion in America. The Christian Action Team of First Church, Crystal Springs, invites citizens in churches across Copiah County and beyond to participate in the Right-to-Life Life Chain in Jackson or to form local Life Chains or prayer circles around each local church.

On Oct. 6, those participating will go to either the old Wal-Mart parking lot in Pearl on Highway 80, or to the parking lot of Chick-Fil-A on County Line Road to pick up signs and chain positions. Those who prefer to participate locally will make signs, as deemed appropriate.

One of the goals of the Right to Life organization is to make Mississippi the first state to be abortion free. A strong showing of participants on Oct. 6 would make a visible statement, which could bring about change in state and federal laws.

The cries of the unborn are being heard. On August 5, President Bush signed into law the Born Alive Infants Protection Act that provides for the protection of a child who survives a botched abortion. This new law is a stunning victory that should send a clear signal to pro-choice proponents that America values life and will continue to fight for the rights of the unborn.

Edna Earle Crews
Crystal Springs

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PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER, First Baptist Church, Plantersville, Miss. Less than 100 in Sunday school. Fax resume to 662-842-3632 or email jerrycuta@juno.com.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, RIPLEY, MISS. is seeking a qualified person for Youth Minister (full-time position). Send resume to First Baptist Church, 202 East Pine Street, Ripley, MS 38663.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Committing to Life

Genesis 9:1-6; 8-17

By Gene Neal

Have you read the morning paper? Did you watch the evening news last night? War! Injustice! Economic disaster! Disease! Gloom and despair! How can Christians have hope about life when so much seems wrong? One of the early answers in scripture to that question is found in the story of the great Flood and the covenant God made with Noah, his family, his descendants, and all living creatures. In this story, and especially the covenant, we learn a great deal about God and His great love for mankind. We see very clearly that God's covenant with Noah is the foundation stone for building a biblical view about the value and future of life.

The word "covenant" is not

often used in modern vocabulary. It is, however, a vital word for understanding the Bible and our relationship with God. In this context, a covenant is a sacred bond that unites two parties of unequal authority, specifically, God and man. We must also realize that this covenant was not made with Noah only. Genesis 9:9 says that the covenant was with Noah's seed, or his descendants that come after him. That means that the terms of the covenant are still applicable today. And exactly what are the terms of the covenant? Basically, the covenant deals with God's relationship with man, man's relationship with man, and man's relationship with God's creation.

In the Garden of Eden, God created a perfect environment



Neal

giving man "dominion" over the animals; but after the Flood, He states that there will be a fear of man in every creature. In the garden, Adam and Eve were provided fruit and plants to eat (Gen. 1:29; 2:9, 16); but after the Flood, God added meat to the menu. While Cain was a farmer and Abel a shepherd, Noah and his family became hunters. We find an interesting statement in Genesis 9:4 when God says that there is life in the blood. Even while establishing a new covenant, God may have been pointing to the future when life would be received through the atoning blood of Jesus! The matter of what was permissible food continued to be debated even in Jesus' day. This covenant made it clear that all foods were acceptable as did Jesus, Peter, and Paul.

The covenant also speaks to man's relationship with his fellow man. God revealed a part of His own character, that is, His deep commitment to human life, when He

demanding that there be accountability for the taking of a life. Many interpreters see Genesis 9:5-6 as the point when God ordained human government for the purpose of protecting human life. Most evangelical interpreters also understand verse 6 as part of the biblical foundation for the government's God-given responsibility to carry out capital punishment. Another passage for study in this area would be Romans 13:1-7. Returning to our Genesis text, whatever else it teaches us, it is clear that God values human life. Those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ have no liberty to form alternative opinions regardless of social, philosophical, or political affiliations.

This covenant is a beautiful expression of God's love for mankind. God unconditionally promised that He would never again send another flood to destroy all life on earth. To make it emphatic, He said "never again" three times. At this point we should be careful to note what He did not

promise. The covenant does not promise God will refrain from sending judgment against human wickedness nor does it promise that life on earth as we know it will go on forever nor does it promise that flood waters will never again cause human or animal death or suffering. The covenant, as well as the entire story of the Flood, is about God's grace offered to mankind. It's about hearing God's voice in a world of unbelief and staking your life on it. It's about being ready to obey when others around you don't understand or agree. It's about seeing hope when others see disaster. God even gave mankind a symbol of that hope in the rainbow, a reminder of His love, grace, and faithfulness. While we must be careful not to make more of the rainbow than is proper, we can see it as a beautiful reminder that He is always watching, always loving, and always ready to pour out His grace on those who will receive it.

Neal is the pastor of First Church, Quitman.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Real Life or Judgment

John 5

By Ginger M. Caughman

Seconds before an airplane leaves the runway, the pilot has to make a decision. "Do I take off or stay on the ground?" When the decision is made to move the plane into the sky, this rousing expression is transmitted to the tower: "We're committed to flight!"

What are your commitments? Have you made a commitment to God through Jesus Christ? The four Bible lessons in October show some ways people give consideration to real life and how Jesus responded to people who did not accept meaningful life in Him. Next week and the following one we will study more about the demands of our life long commitment to Christ, His enabling gift of the Holy Spirit, and how to better depend on

Him, but this week is a prerequisite. What about those who have not committed to Christ? The serious focus of this week's Bible study is to realize the danger of rejecting Jesus and refusing His offer of eternal salvation. The Bible teaches that the choice of rejecting real life in Christ produces judgment. The purpose of this lesson is to help you demonstrate that you know the danger of refusing God's offer of real life.

1. Watch Out! Read John 5:1-15.

The walls around Jerusalem have many gates. One Sabbath day Jesus healed an invalid at the Sheep Gate pool of Bethesda, later telling the man to repent and change his way of life or "something worse will happen" (v. 14). Worse would



Caughman

be the judgment of eternal punishment. Without Jesus, people are in spiritual danger.

2. Hear the Truth! Read John 5:16-18, 24-26. Note verse 24.

Bill and I were at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. "Do not take photographs out of respect for the Jewish Sabbath," our guide instructed. "Pressing the camera shutter is considered work."

When the healed man carried his mat, this was forbidden work. Likewise the healing work of Jesus on the Sabbath broke the Jewish laws. Then Jesus talked to God in open prayer, calling Him Father. The religious leaders were furious. "He was even calling God His own Father," they said, "making Himself equal with God" (v. 18b).

Jesus spoke the truth (verses 19, 24) because He is truth. In John 14:6, we read the words of our Lord Jesus: "I am the way and the truth and the life." Jesus emphasized

the dual importance of hearing and believing in Him to have real life. Re-read John 5:24, a key verse of this lesson. Salvation is offered to each person without real life.

3. Be Warned! Read John 5:27-30.

Jesus often called Himself Son of Man as He does here (v.27). Jesus warned His audience about the certainty of judgment for those refusing God's offer of real life.

Be warned today of the certainty of judgment for those without Christ.

4. Accept the Scriptures! Read John 5:35-40.

Jesus had said that John was the greatest of the prophets. (See Mathew 11:11). John-the-Baptist knew his place in God's kingdom as we have seen before in this study of John. He was the forerunner of the Christ and met Jesus declaring, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" When his disciples quizzed him about the Christ, the testimony of John the Baptist was challenging to us:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30 KJV).

This week in John 5 we read the words of Jesus: "John was a lamp that burned and gave light" (v. 35). The difference was that John gave light but Jesus was and is the light of the world.

"Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'" (John 8:12). Scripture helps explain Scripture.

Are you searching for meaning in your life? "Search" in Greek (v.39) has the same form for a command (KJV) and a declaration (NIV). "Search the scriptures" (KJV) and "diligently study the Scriptures" (NIV); Either way, Jesus wanted His audience to accept the Scriptural truths about Him. Real life comes only to those who believe in Jesus the Christ, Son of God and Son of Man. Do you have real life?

Caughman is a member of First Church, Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.



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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

September 1-15, 2002

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Starvation on upswing in southern Africa

LILONGWE, Malawi (BP) — A deepening food crisis is threatening the lives and health of more than 14 million people in southern Africa, and Southern

Baptists are working to prevent disaster and share Christ's love with hurting individuals. Officials estimate that 300,000 people could die in the next several months from famine caused by drought, floods, civil war, AIDS and other factors. The United Nations has requested more than \$600 million for food, agriculture and health aid, and relief organizations are sending thousands of tons of food into the region.

Missionaries in southern Africa are partnering with local believers to identify groups overlooked by major aid organizations, which often focus on heavily populated areas.

"We attempt to identify the cracks in the plans of the major donors to see where we can be of some help," said Sam Upton, a Southern Baptist missionary who is coordinating relief work in Malawi.

Upton and other believers have made plans to share Christ's love with at least 8,000 families using \$90,000 in world hunger funds. The believers will work in all three regions of Malawi, including the mega-city of Blantyre.

"Over the last 40 years, Malawi has been one of the most responsive places in the world to the gospel," says Upton. "We pray that this opportunity for sharing the gospel will continue to stay open wide."

From mid-September through mid-October, missionaries and local believers will distribute starter packs of seed and fertilizer in hopes of facilitating a better harvest next year. They will use churches as

distribution points, and pastors will share the good news. Believers and non-believers alike will receive aid.

Next January through March, when hunger is expected to be worst, they'll share maize with the people — beginning with the elderly, widows and orphans.

"It may get worse before it gets better," said Jim Brown, International Mission Board human needs consultant.

One pastor reports that families in his village are eating just two meals per day, usually skipping the noon meal so they don't have to go to bed with empty stomachs. He anticipates they will cut down to one meal before the April harvest.

After the pastor's adult daughter died, he began raising her children, along with his own. Eleven hungry people look to him for food. Many grandparents are in this situation, as hunger — magnified by drought, disease, and the AIDS crisis — takes its toll.

"AIDS has really decimated the southern part of Africa," Brown said. "It hits middle-aged, productive people, and you're left with grandparents and kids." Many grandparents don't have the health or the skills to earn a living, so children are forced to quit school and work to support their families.

"My wife, Marlyn, and I are praying that, as in biblical times, God will just stretch the corn, and it will not run out," Upton said.

In Angola, where decades of civil war have just ended, close to half a million people face starvation. Four million people — a third of the population — have been driven from their homes.

Southern Baptist missionaries have been providing food, blankets and other supplies to

the displaced people of that country, and they've looked for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Because of the generosity of Southern Baptists, missionaries around the world have hunger funds to turn to — and doors for the gospel are opened. When missionaries alleviate physical suffering, non-believers see the love of Christ in action and often become curious about the love that motivates Christians to help them.

As missionaries meet physical needs, they earn credibility and are able to share the gospel with village chiefs and government officials. Disciples are made as local believers serve side-by-side with missionaries.

Southern Baptist workers in Malawi have used \$15,000 in world hunger funds to begin the effort. Over the next several months, \$75,000 more is needed.

It's a relatively small amount of money, but the missionaries have a well-developed strategy to reach people with food, farming supplies and the Gospel. "The plans are very strategic," Brown said.

In the southern part of Africa today, Southern Baptists are seeking to meet hunger needs before the situation becomes a crisis.

"There is shortage of food and hunger in Malawi, but we are not yet to the stage of famine," Upton said. "Whether or not we reach that stage will depend upon the response of the world community, including Baptists."

Contributions toward the efforts can be sent to: International Mission Board, Southern Africa Relief, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230. Every dollar given will be used 100% for relief ministries in southern Africa.



HUNGRY SOULS — In the developing world, more than 800 million people suffer from chronic hunger, says Steve Nelson, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville. At least 70% of those live in countries where access to the gospel is restricted. Hunger relief projects create opportunities to share God's love with hungry souls. (BR photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

First person: food crisis very real to missionaries

By Mary Thompson
IMB missionary

LILONGWE, Malawi (BP) — My husband Van and I work with our Baptist seminary here in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. Since last February, seminary students and graduates have been coming to us with stories of how people are starving to death in their communities.

One pastor, a graduate of our seminary, told me about four people in his churches who have starved to death. The attendance at his preaching points and churches has declined significantly because people do not have the energy to walk for lack of nourishment. Those who make it to church ask to be allowed to sit since they are too weak to stand for a long time.

One seminary student, Nellie, is well-known in her community for teaching children through a backyard Bible club. Three little children heard of Nellie's love

for children and went to her house, saying they had not eaten for three days. Nellie is a widow, a full-time seminary student, and a mother with children still living at home. With all these other obligations, though, Nellie went into her own supplies and gave the children a meal for a few days' nourishment.

An elderly gentleman, weak from hunger, fell faint outside Nellie's house. Nellie gave him a small parcel of food, some funds for his journey, and prayed that he would find food.

Our growing season around Lilongwe is usually from the first of December through March. It is a very long time until the harvest for people who are already struggling for their daily bread.

We pray Southern Baptists will continue to respond to our projects for the human needs of the people of Malawi. Thank you for what you are already doing.



Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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RLH KDU GYHCVKJUH

GNCKD, MDLGLUWUH

SUACUWUKD LE

DCK GDNA ELK SU

NGDNXUT.

HLXNEG KUE: UAUWUE

Clue: E=N

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: ACTS TWENTY: TWENTY-SIX